The major steps taken by Central Government in this regard are as under.

States are provided advisories for contingency crop planning, programmatic intervention such as allowing use of truthfully leveled (TL) seeds and provisioning additional power to energize irrigation pumps to the States. States have been given flexibility to utilize the funds under various Central schemes to meet the additional requirement of seed distribution. Subsidy norms of rice, wheat, jowar, bajra and pulses have been increased under various crops development schemes of Ministry of Agriculture for Rabi/summer 2009-10 season. Age limit norms of certified seed of rice wheat and pulses varieties have been relaxed and additional area coverage under boro/summer rice/wheat/pulses has been planned for enhancing rice production. Additional allocations of rust resistant and terminal heat-tolerant varieties of wheat minikit have been made. Availability and supply of essential inputs such as fertiliser, additional power for irrigation has been ensured in coordination with States and various Central Ministries.

Miserable condition of farmers in U.P.

1702. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that condition of farmers of Uttar Pradesh who constitute 2/3rd population of State, is very miserable;

(b) if so, whether any survey has been conducted to ascertain their real condition;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, whether Government will conduct any survey in this regard;

(d) whether it is also a fact that due to policies of Government, 90 per cent farmers of U.P. are not able to even feed their families properly; and

(e) the details of farmers who committed suicide in northern States during last three years, State-wise and year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Impact of bio-fuels on food prices and production

1703. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a World Bank study has revealed that bio-fuels are responsible for hike in food prices that has pushed hundred million people below poverty line;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the impact of bio-fuels in India; and

(d) the steps being taken to increase food production to bring the food price at reasonable level?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (d) The World Bank Study was based on bio-fuel production in USA where edible green crops like Soyabean, maize etc. were purportedly diverted for obtaining ethanol. Very little area is under bio-fuel production in India. Further, the Government as a policy encourages bio-fuel plantations only on wastelands. As such there has been no adverse impact of promoting bio-fuels on increase in food prices in India. The Government has also been encouraging research institutions such as Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to develop high yielding varieties and technologies for achieving higher production and productivity of all food crops. Besides, in pursuance of the decision taken in the meeting of the National Development Council (NDC) a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "National Food Security Mission" has been launched from Rabi 2007-08. The aim of the Mission is to increase production of rice, wheat and pulses by 10 million tonnes, 8 million tonnes and 2 million tonnes respectively by the end of Eleventh Plan. In addition, the Government of India provides assistance for seeds and crop development programmes to enhance production and productivity under various schemes such as "Development and Strengthening of Infrastructure Facilities for Production and Distribution of Quality Seeds", "Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM)", "Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)", "Macro-Management of Agriculture (MMA)", "Technology Mission on Cotton", "Technology Mission on Jute and Mesta", "National Horticulture Mission (NHM)" and "Technology Mission on Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States (TMNE)" etc.

National Policy on Millet

1704. DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated any 'National Policy on Millet' as India is the top producer of Millet in the world with 10.6 million tonnes per year and domestic consumer and exporter with value addition;

(b) if so, the strategies formulated to increase the production by fixing the Minimum Support Price and for exploring possibility of evolving decentralized multigrain and need based PDS suiting to the local condition; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) No, Sir However, National Agriculture Policy (July 2000) focused for special efforts to raise the production and productivity of crops to meet the increasing demand for food. Accordingly, to enhance the production and productivity of cereals including millet, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of "Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Coarse Cereals (excluding Maize) Based Cropping System Areas (ICDP - Coarse Cereals)" under Macro Management Mode of Agriculture is in operation in the major coarse cereals growing States in the